2027 Energy Efficiency Council (EEC) Education Committee Proposal

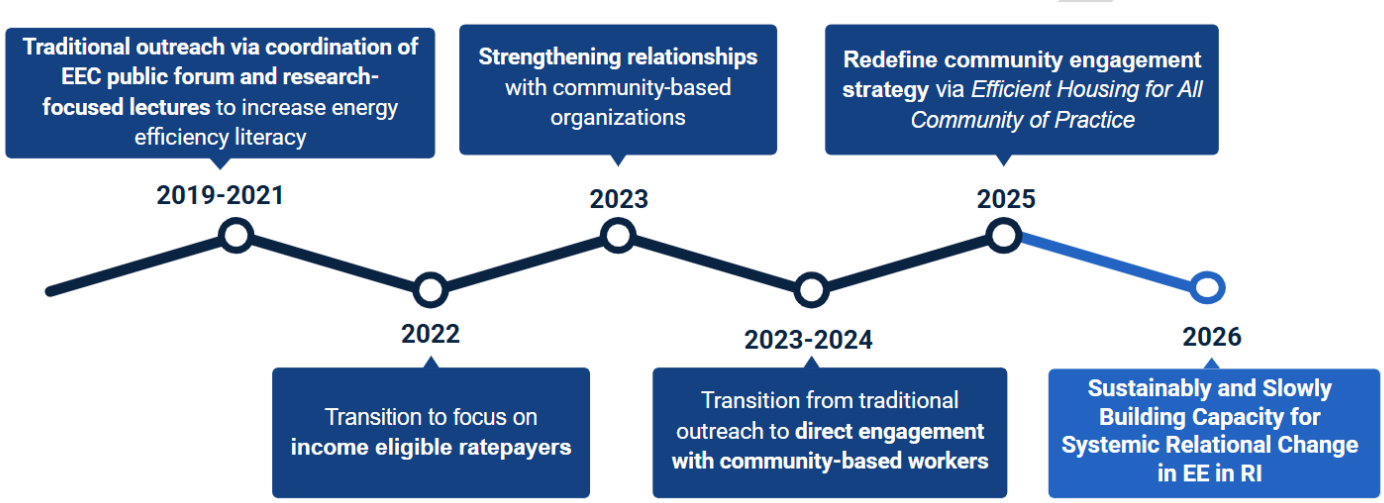
A supplement to the 2026 agreement for the a RI Community-Based Energy Efficiency Navigator Program

University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, last updated 11.04.26 by KVH & KLD

CONTEXT

The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI Extension) has been supporting the RI Energy Efficiency Council since 2019 with a constantly evolving approach to education and engagement around energy efficiency (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: URI Extension's Evolving Approach to Community Engagement in Energy Efficiency



Over the last year, we've gained a new, refined perspective about the challenges and costs associated with true, equitable and effective community engagement. Based on national best practices, the evolving programmatic ecosystem, and the reality on the ground in Central Falls, RI, this updated scope of work broadens proposed efforts in 2026 to design and host a "training" into the need for a "program". This broader focus honors the lessons learned through our seven years of work on behalf of the EEC, and additional evidence provided through our new partnership with the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE). The importance of focusing more broadly will maximize the effectiveness of the Community-based Energy Efficiency Navigator (C-BEEN) Program in increasing participation in energy efficiency programs among RI's income-eligible ratepayers and landlords. This education and engagement effort seeks to bridge the gap between participation in energy efficiency programs, high energy burden, high energy consumption and unhealthy housing through the development of community-based energy navigators, in coordination with statewide energy navigators and other structural elements of the energy efficiency landscape in Rhode Island.

THE SITUATION

Income-eligible ratepayers have the highest energy burden and the unhealthiest homes, but participation in energy efficiency programs that reduce energy costs and enhance building performance because:

- They lack of awareness of energy efficiency programs;
- They lack trust in utility services and energy-related programs; and
- Applications, timelines and stigmatizing language limit ratepayer participation in energy efficiency programs.

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Community-based workers have the skills and community trust needed to fill this gap, but they lack the specific knowledge required to teach income-eligible ratepayers about:

- Why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health;
- The difference between market rate and income eligible EE services, the commonly used terminology for each, and the most common weatherization deferrals in RI; and
- The Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

INPUTS

The following resources, investments, and raw materials are required to implement all elements of the C-BEEN Program outlined in this proposal:

- Facilitation by the URI Cooperative Extension Energy Literacy Initiative (CEELI) team based on learnings from the *Efficient Housing for All* Community of Practice;
- Technical assistance from RI Energy and the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) related to training content development and training evaluation;
- Advisement from the RI Energy Efficiency Council (RI EEC) Education team and RI Energy Equity Working Group (EWG) related to equity in programming and general coordination across RI programs;
- Input via key informant interviews with over thirty energy, public health, housing, and community engagement experts on topics including (but not limited to) training content, program design, trainee incentive scheme development, landlord outreach, and community context;
- Coordination with and support from the Statewide Energy Navigator Program implementing agency, Rhode Island Energy and their energy efficiency vendors (e.g CleaRESULT and The RISE Group), and Rhode Island's Comprehensive Action Program (CAP) Agencies;
- Community engagement and participation through the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Program (TTAP), RI Energy Equity Working Group (EWG), Children's Friend, City of Central Falls and the Community Health Worker Association of RI (CHWARI); and
- Translation services.

AUDIENCE

Primary: Community-based workers and landlords in Central Falls

Secondary: Income eligible ratepayers, including renters

ACTIVITIES (by year)

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1. Community-Based Energy Efficiency Navigator (C-BEEN) Training

★ Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2026 include:

- Conducting a literature review to identify best practices and lessons learned to inform C-BEEN program and training design;
- Conducting key informant interviews with key stakeholders and experts in energy, public health, housing, and community engagement, including (but not limited to): Emily Koo (Acadia Center), David Ruggiero and Andrew Broccolo (City of Providence Sustainability), Dana Beale, Wade Rya, Matt Francisco and Rita Rose (CLEAResult), Bert Cooper, Bryan Evans, Anabel Espinal (Green and Healthy Homes Initiative), Brenda Clement (HousingWorksRI), Daphany Rose Sanchez (KC3), Carinel LeGrand and Brendan Dagher (Rhode Island Energy), Steve Chybowski, Georgia Cheney (RI Office of Energy Resources), Timothy Lett (RI Weatherization Assistance Program), Danielle Woody and Nicholas Thibault (The RISE Group), Carrie Bridges (Brown University Health), Tonya Glantz, Laura Blackwell (Community Health Worker Association RI), Manuela Barcelos (Health Equity Institute), Jim Logan and Leonardo Carnicelli (Pawtucket Central Falls Health Equity Zone), Patricia Martinez (Central Falls School District), Owen Heleen and Claudia Villa (Children's Friend), Andrew Pierson (PCF Development), Dayanarah Baez (Providence Community Action Program), Jim Logan and Leo Carnicelli (Local Initiative Support Corporation), Mya Kemp and Amelia Luisi (Meals on Wheels), Margie Lynch (NV5 Consulting), Mike Roy (Addison County Energy Navigator Program), Gabe Shapiro (All In Energy), Weatherization Action Program State Monitors, Progreso Latino, Blackstone Valley Community Health, Blackstone Valley Community Action Program, CrossRoads, Clinica Esperanza, Central Falls Housing Authority, CLEAResult Field Monitors, Concord, MA Heating/Cooling Coaches, Providence Preservation Revolving Fund, One Neighborhood Builders, Association of Non-Profit and Community Development Groups, Rhode Island Community Action Association, Housing Network of RI, RIHousing, ITO Health, Rhode Island Building Officials Association, Jenks Park Pediatrics.
- Coordinating with ACEEE to ensure that technical assistance aligns with the specific needs of the C-BEEN program;
- Synthesizing findings with ACEEE technical assistance into C-BEEN program and curriculum design;
- Developing program design inputs, including logic model, process map, client experience map, and Central Falls resource guide;

★ Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2027 include:

- Developing a training curriculum and workbook focused on equipping community-based workers with the knowledge, communication skills, and practical tools to help residents understand home energy efficiency, identify opportunities, navigate available programs, and feel empowered to take action;
- Gathering resources for participants that includes information about residential energy efficiency programs and incentives, and identify gaps for RI Energy to create resources around; and

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- Planning and facilitating a Community-based Energy Navigator training for community-based workers using lessons learned from the EHACoP, targeting 50 participants in one cohort.

2. <u>RI Home Weatherization Roadmap</u>

★ Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2026 include:

- Refining the roadmap drafted in 2025 with input from the EEC and EWG;
- Working with the URI Environmental Data Center programmers to turn the roadmap into a digital decision tree that can be used as an educational tool for community-based workers and to guide ratepayers through the weatherization process; and

★ Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2027 include:

- Hosting an online roadmap beta testing workshop and make adjustments in coordination with the URI Environmental Data Center to finalize and launch the tool.

3. <u>Community-Based Worker (CBW) Incentive System Development:</u>

★ Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2027 include:

- Working with the CHWARI and RIDOH's Health Equity Zone Initiative / Learning Community to formalize a public health workforce development incentive structure that encourages engagement in energy efficiency.

4. <u>C-BEEN Workshop:</u>

★ Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2027 include:

- Hosting one in-person C-BEEN workshop to engage with and gather feedback from CBWs on Community-based Energy Navigator Training curriculum, RI Home Weatherization Roadmap, and community-based worker incentive system.

5. <u>Landlord Engagement:</u>

- Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2026 include:
  - Conducting key informant interviews with landlord-facing organizations in Central Falls , RI
- Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2027 include:
  - Coordinating with RI Energy on landlord outreach efforts to complement the C-BEEN program in Central Falls.

★ **<u>Partner Coordination:</u>**

- Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2027 include:
  - Coordinating with the following ratepayer support programs to ensure alignment and seamless guidance:

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- Statewide Energy Navigator Program
- RI Energy Customer Advocate Program
- Auditors at RI CAP agencies, CleaRESULT and The RISE Group

OUTPUTS

- Outputs to be completed by December 31, 2026 include:
  - Key Informant Interview Summary Report
  - Data Consolidation Matrix, including program and training design input from key informant interviews, ACEEE feedback, C-BEEN partner organization feedback, and literature review
  - C-BEEN Logic Model
  - Digital RI Home Weatherization Roadmap web tool
  - C-BEEN Process Map
  - C-BEEN Client Experience Map
- Outputs to be completed by December 31, 2027 include:
  - C-BEEN training curriculum, including lesson plans and instructional materials
  - C-BEEN Workshop with community-based workers
  - C-BEEN training for (1) group of CBWs
  - CBW incentive system implementation
  - Final C-BEEN Pilot Program Report

OUTCOMES

In the short-term (immediately following the training), community-based workers [primary audience] are empowered to assist ratepayers with weatherization programs using the RI Home Weatherization Roadmap, and are confident:

a) Defining energy efficiency and weatherization;

b) Naming at least three ways that home weatherization improves quality of life;

c) Explaining the process of weatherization for RI ratepayers;

d) With the components of an energy bill and the energy efficiency programs funded by ratepayers that clients can benefit from (and have already paid for); and

e) With where their role as C-BEENs ends and where other complementary programs' roles begin.

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In the medium-term (post training), community-based workers [primary audience] will:

a) Incorporate energy-efficiency conversations into their routine home visits with ratepayer clients;

b) Equip ratepayer clients with knowledge about how to access energy efficiency programs;

c) Identify ratepayer clients who may benefit from energy efficiency programs;

d) Refer ratepayer clients to appropriate energy efficiency programs and services; and

e) Help ratepayer clients to navigate barriers to accessing available programs.

In the medium-term, through training and support offered by community-based health workers, income-eligible ratepayers [secondary audience] will:

a) Participate in energy efficiency programs for which they are eligible; and

b) Implement home energy efficiency upgrades.

And long-term, the C-BEEN Program will yield:

a) An increase in participation in energy-efficiency programs among Central Falls ratepayer clients of C-BEEN partner organizations;

b) A stronger connection between energy efficiency programs and resources as part of the community-based service toolbox;

c) A sustainable model for incorporating energy education into community health/home-visiting services;

d) The expansion of the C-BEEN model to additional Rhode Island communities; and

e) Reduced energy consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions, contributing to Rhode Island's Act on Climate goals.

TIMELINE - GANTT CHART

BUDGET

Activities listed above and marked “Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2026” are covered under URI AWD11451 (April 6, 2026 - December 4, 2027) in the amount of $90,000. Note: Not reflected in URI AWD11451 is the in-kind contribution of $13,000 for an undergraduate Energy Literacy Fellow who assisted in completing the work outlined above.

Activities marked “Tasks to be completed by December 31, 2027” are included in Table 1: 2027 Budget by Activity on page 7 of this document. Note: Not reflected in the Table 1 budget is an in-kind contribution of $15,000 for an undergraduate Environmental Management Fellow to assist in completing the work outlined above and in the table below. The total budget for the work to be completed by December 31, 2027 is not to exceed the total below, though the costs per activity may be adjusted as each aspect of the proposal is finalized.

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Table 1: 2027 Budget by Activity

DIRECT COSTS		
Activity 1: *Training Content Development*	URI staff (RA IV + RA II) salary and fringe to curate training participant resources. ★ *RA IV: 28 hours * $82.48/hour = $2,309.44* ★ *RA II: 136 hours * $56.27/hour = $7,652.72*	$9,962.16
Activity 2: *RI Home Weatherization Roadmap Beta Testing*	URI staff salary and fringe to host an online roadmap beta testing workshop and make adjustments in coordination with the URI Environmental Data Center to finalize and launch the tool ★ *RA IV: 15 hours * $82.48/hour = $1,237.20* ★ *RA II: 67 hours * $56.27/hour = $3,770.09*	$5,007.29
Activity 3: *Incentive System Development*	URI staff salary and fringe to formalize a public health workforce development incentive structure that encourages engagement in energy efficiency in partnership with CHWARI and the RIDOH Health Equity Zone Initiative / Learning Community. ★ *RA IV: 32 hours * $82.48/hour = $2,639.36* ★ *RA II: 120 hours * $56.27/hour = $6,752.40*	$9,391.76
Activity 4: *C-BEEN Workshop*	URI staff salary and fringe to host one in-person C-BEEN workshop to gather feedback about program outputs (e.g. C-BEEN curriculum, roadmap, incentive system) and synthesize results. ★ *RA IV: 12 hours * $82.48/hour = $989.76* ★ *RA II: 27 hours * $56.27/hour = $1,519.29*	$2,509.05
Activity 5: *Training Facilitation*	URI staff salary and fringe to plan and facilitate training for one cohort of Community-Based Energy Navigators. ★ *RA IV: 36 hours * $82.48/hour = $2,969.00* ★ *RA II: 36 hours * $56.27/hour = $2,026.00*	$4,995.00
Activity 6: *Training Evaluation & Reporting*	URI staff salary and fringe to evaluate the results of the C-BEEN training and write a report summarizing the results. ★ *RA IV: 38 hours * $82.48/hour = $3,134.24* ★ *RA II: 122 hours * $56.27/hour = $6,864.94*	$9,999.18
Activity 7: *Participant Engagement Administration*	URI staff salary and fringe to manage the administrative tasks associated with monitoring C-BEEN engagement, communicating with C-BEENs, and procuring and distributing incentive payments for workshop, training, and program participation. ★ *RA IV: 40 hours * $82.48/hour = $3,299.20* ★ *RA II: 48 hours * $56.27/hour = $2,700.96*	$6,000.16
Incentive Payments	Incentives for CHWs who a) Participate in C-BEEN workshop (~20 CBWs at $50/CBW): $1,000; b) Complete C-BEEN training (~30 CBWs at $200/CBW): $6,000; and c) Complete energy efficiency house visits to connect residents with and support them through the home energy assessment and weatherization process (~30 CBWs at $400/CBW): $12,000	$19,000.00
Printing	Printing of resources developed for C-BEENs to share with residents	$1,000
Refreshments	In-person session refreshments	$1,500
	TOTAL DIRECT COSTS:	$79,364.60
INDIRECT COSTS		
Off-campus Facilities and Administration rate of 26% of direct costs		$20,634.80
	TOTAL:	**$99,999.40**

QUESTIONS about this proposal should be directed to Kate Hardesty (kate@uri.edu; 401.874.4096).

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